

**Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm**

July 27, 2007

This is Governor Jennifer Granholm.

This weekend, Michigan is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Mackinac Bridge. Back in 1957, the Mighty Mac opened for the first time, connecting Michigan's Upper and Lower peninsulas. It was the longest suspension bridge in the world at the time it was built, a record that would hold for more than 30 years.

The Bridge was an enormous challenge at a critical juncture in Michigan's history. But proponents believed it could fuel economic growth for the state. Despite initial skepticism, which persisted even after the span was completed, the bridge proved to be a smart investment, and became a symbol of Michigan's strength and ingenuity.

Michigan Governor Mennen Williams described it at the time as "the manifestation of the spirit of Michigan - a spirit adventurous, unafraid, respectful of the past, but eager to meet the future."

In the global economy of the 21st century, the challenges to our economic future are no longer as concrete as figuring out how to span a vast channel. But the spirit that Governor Williams described 50 years ago still fits Michigan citizens.

Our economy was built on agriculture and manufacturing, and we've been at the forefront of innovation in the automotive industry for a century. We must embrace that history but push forward, unafraid, and eager to meet the future. Facing immense challenges of outsourcing and globalization, Michigan must respond with innovative, even revolutionary, steps forward.

We recognize that, as the state that put the world on wheels, we have a unique opportunity to be the state that breaks our nation's dependence on foreign oil. And we know that we can build on our traditional economic strengths to fuel our growth in the next booming industries.

So, just as our state undertook more than 50 years ago to do something that no one else in the world had done, we have undertaken our own immense challenge today. We're transforming our economy into a diverse, vibrant, 21st century powerhouse that has thriving alternative energy businesses, advanced manufacturing firms, life sciences facilities and homeland security companies.

I will continue to go anywhere and do anything to bring good paying jobs to Michigan in these cutting edge industries. And, once our comprehensive economic plan is achieving that goal, I have no doubt that other states and nations will follow our lead.

That's what Michigan's history is all about – from cars to the biggest bridge the world ever knew. This weekend, we'll celebrate that history on the Mighty Mac, and we won't stop working everyday to forge the next steps in Michigan's economic future.

Thank you for listening.